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SOME NOTES ON THE NEW ENGLAND SPECIES OF TELLINA

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No doubt many like myself have been at a loss to separate *Tellina tenella* Verr. from *Tellina tenera* Say, especially if they have attempted to use the figures given by Verrill. In 1872 Verrill¹ described and figured a species under the name of *Angulus modestus*. The name being preoccupied it was changed by Verrill to *Angulus tenellus* in 1873². Recognizing *Angulus* as a genus Verrill also changed *tenera* to *tener*. It is certainly at most, only a subgenus. Dall in 1900³ says:—"The name *tenella* has been used earlier in *Tellina* but I have lost the reference." I have been unable to find a species *T. tenella* prior to 1873; perhaps Dr. Dall had in mind *Tellina tenella* Jeffreys 1881⁴, described from C. Sagres, Portugal, a very different shell, for which the new name TELLINA JEFFREYSI is here proposed.

The question of *Tellina tenella* was recently called to my attention by Mr. J. Henry Blake who brought to the Museum his entire New England collection of the genus, including some specimens of *T. tenella* determined by Verrill. One specimen, the first that I have seen agreeing perfectly with the one figured by Verrill, represents a specimen that is far from what should be considered typical of the species. The form of the shell is abnormal and the irregular growth lines are due to erosion. A perfect specimen has the dorsal margin straight and not "slightly concave" and is smooth with fine, regular concentric lines.

¹ Amer. Jour. Sci. and Arts, vol. 3, ser. 3, p. 285, pl. 6.

² Invert. Animals of Vineyard Sound, p. 677, pl. 30, fig. 224.

³ Proc. U. S. Nat. Mus., vol. 23, p. 295.

⁴ Proc. Zool. Soc. London, 1881, p. 721, pl. 51, fig. 4.

The two species are quite readily separated, *T. tenera* being much higher and the lower edge of the valves more arcuate. It measures from 8 to 10 mm. in height and from 12 to 15 mm. in length. The largest specimen of *T. tenella* before me is 7 mm. in height and 12 mm. in length. The color of the two species varies from white to pinkish. In *tenella* the periostracum is often thicker than in *tenera*, giving the shell a yellowish appearance. The teeth of the hinge are more equal in size in *tenella* than in *tenera*.

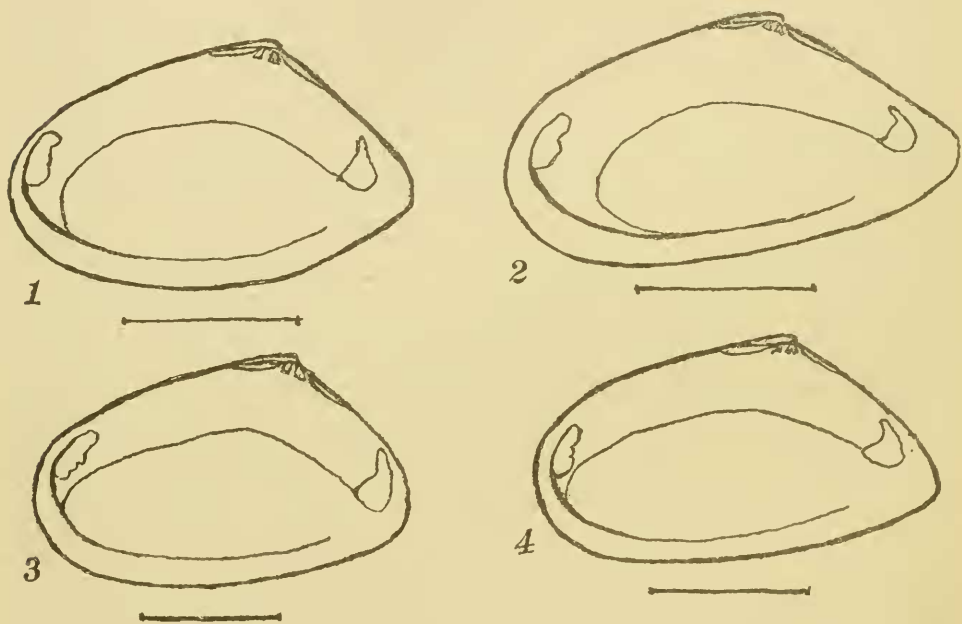


Fig. 1. *Tellina (Angulus) tenera* Say. Fig. 2. *Macoma tenta* Say. Fig. 3. *Tellina (Angulus) tenella* Verrill. Fig. 4. *Tellina (Angulus) versicolor* (Cozzens) DeKay.

The figure that is apt to mislead a student is that given on Verrill's plate 6 figure 1, showing what is said to be the pallial line of *T. tenera*. Say does not mention this character, but Gould says, "sinus of the pallial impression nearly reaching the anterior muscular impression." An examination of all specimens referable to *T. tenera* shows that the distance between the pallial line and the adductor muscle scar is less than the width of the muscle scar; while Verrill's figure shows the distance to be more than double. It was rather puzzling at first, until I happened to glance

at *Macoma tenta* Say and found that here was the exact proportion shown in his figure 1. One can only conclude that after drawing the outline of *T. tenera* he inadvertently picked up a specimen of *M. tenta* to draw the pallial line. His figure (2) of *T. tenella* is correct, the distance between the pallial line and muscle scar being a little narrower than in *T. tenera*.

The distribution of *T. tenera* is from Prince Edward Island to the Gulf of Mexico. It is the *Tellina elucens* Mighels 1844, *T. agilis* Stimpson 1857, and *T. omoia* Ravenel 1875. *Tellina tenella* seems to be confined chiefly to the waters of southern Massachusetts, Rhode Island, and Long Island Sound. Arthur P. Jacot records it from Long Beach and Staten Island, N. Y. Dall in referring to *tenella* says: "The shell referred to this species from Tampa, Florida, by me, appears on further study to be distinct."

Tellina versicolor was only recorded by Cozzens in 1836¹ and later described by DeKay in 1843². According to DeKay the species was "first detected by Mr. I. Cozzens on the shores of the Hudson at Glass-house point, a few miles above the city." Just what part of the present city of New York this locality would now represent I am unable to say, but the fact would now be of little value as far as the species is concerned. Fortunately we are able to positively identify this beautiful little shell which stands quite distinct among the small tellinas. The figures by DeKay are poor, giving the impression that the shell is much higher than it really is. The description and measurements, however, agree with specimens now to be found in favorable localities near New York City. Some beautiful specimens collected at Far Rockaway, N. Y., were sent to the Museum by Mr. Arthur P. Jacot, he also obtained some specimens at Long Beach, N. Y. The color is an opalescent white usually with rays of pink that widen toward the margin. The pallial line is very close to the adductor muscle scar. Length of the largest specimen before me is 14 mm., height 8 mm.

¹ In Jay's Catl. Shells, ed. 2, p. 12.

² Natural Hist. N. Y. Moll., p. 209, pl. 26, fig. 172.